

Serial No.: 09/450,381

**REMARKS**

Claims 1-30 are now pending in the application. The Applicants have amended claims 1, 9, 14, 21, 22, 24, 25 and 29.

Claims 1-3, 7, 14, 15, 18, 20, 28 and 30 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent Number 6,151,684 (Alexander et al.) Claims 4, 5, 9-13, 16, 21-23, 25, 26 and 29 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent Number 6,151,684 (Alexander et al.) in view of U.S. Patent Number 6,470,397 (Shah et al.) Claims 6, 8, 17, 19 and 27 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent Number 6,151,684 (Alexander et al.) in view of U.S. Patent Number 6,470,397 (Shah et al.) as applied to claim 5, and further in view of U.S. Patent Number 6,434,656 (Downer et al.) Claims 6, 8, 17, 19 and 27 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent Number 6,151,684 (Alexander et al.) in view of U.S. Patent Number 6,470,397 (Shah et al.) as applied to claim 22, and further in view of U.S. Patent Number 6,148,349 (Chow et al.) The Applicants respectfully traverse each of these rejections based on the following comments.

None of the references relied upon by the Examiner, either alone or in combination disclose or suggest at least features of the present invention of providing a report of multiple paths between a host and a target fabric-attached I/O controller, and directing service requests between the host and the target fabric-attached I/O controller in response to the multiple paths.

Serial No.: 09/450,381

For example, the Alexander et al. patent discloses an enhancement related to fail-over of an I/O controller from a failed node (server) to another node (server). The objective of Alexander et al. is to ensure that an I/O controller that was being used by a node (server) that failed can now be used from another node (server). A major portion of this patent is related to detecting a node (server) failure, such that the I/O controllers it owned can now be used from a different node.

In the present invention, however, access from a single host to an I/O controller is enhanced using multiple paths between the two. The multiple paths between the host and the I/O controller may be used to enhance performance characteristics of traffic between them (for example, according to some embodiments by load-balancing traffic between multiple paths between the host and controller). Additionally, the multiple paths could be used (according to some embodiments) to recover from the failure of one path between the host and the I/O controller. According to the claimed invention, service requests are directed between the host and the target fabric-attached I/O controller in response to the multiple paths. This feature is not disclosed in or suggested by Alexander et al. or any of the other references relied upon by the Examiner.

Regarding claim 7, the Examiner has asserted that Alexander et al. teaches using multiple paths for load balancing I/O requests and/or for fault tolerance. Alexander et al. discloses dealing with a node failure by letting a different node (server) access an I/O controller previously being accessed by the node that has failed. The present invention as claimed, on the other hand, relates to multiple paths between a host and an I/O controller. In fact, Alexander et al. does not discuss any load balancing

Serial No.: 09/450,381

or fault tolerance between a host and an I/O controller as claimed in the present application.

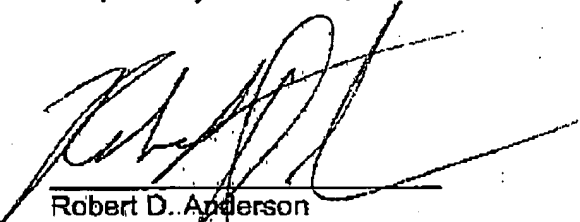
In any case, the Applicants respectfully traverse the prior art rejections relied upon by the Examiner for at least the reasons set forth above. In view of the foregoing, the application is considered to be in condition for allowance. Early notification of the same is earnestly solicited. If there are any questions regarding the present application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

December 19, 2003

Date

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